**Lecture 1**

**BASIC NOTIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

1. The concept of cross-cultural communication.

2. Cross-cultural communication as a field of study of: anthropology, psychology,

linguistics, communication and cultural studies.

3. Communication as process. Language as a powerful means of communication.

4. The concept of culture.

5. Communication types: direct and indirect communication.

6. Pragmatics of communication.

7. The basic units of verbal communication: texts and speech acts.

***Cross-cultural communication***

Cross-cultural communication refers to interpersonal communication and

interaction across different cultures. This has become an important issue in our age of

globalization and internationalization. Effective cross-cultural communication is

concerned with overcoming cultural differences across nationality, religion, borders,

culture and behavior. The term *cross-cultural* generally used to describe comparative

studies of cultures.

Culture is the basic concept of cross-cultural communication. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines *culture* as *'the integrated pattern of human knowledge,* *belief and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting* *knowledge to succeeding generations*'. Another usage in the same dictionary stresses the social aspect of culture and defines it as *'the customary beliefs, social forms, and material* *traits of a racial, religious or social group'*.

The OED, in a similar vein, states that culture is ' *a particular form, stage, or type of intellectual development or civilization in a society; a society or group characterized by its distinctive customs, achievements, products, outlook, etc.*' It almost goes without saying that there can hardly be any learning or transmitting knowledge or intellectual development without language. Nor can a society or a group function without language.

Culture not only dictates who talks what, to whom, how, and why, but also helps to determine how communication proceeds, and how messages transmit the intended meanings.

Cross-cultural communication — the comparison of communication across

cultures. Although cross-cultural communication needs:

*Listening Skills*

Their emphasis usually lies on being a competent speaker, listening is a key skill

that many business personnel do not exercise enough. For cross-cultural communication,

attentive listening is critical to be able to understand meanings, read between the lines

and enable to empathize with the speaker.

*Speaking Skills*

Listening and speaking must work in tandem for effective cross-cultural

communication. Speaking well is not about accent, use of grammar and vocabulary or

having the gift of the gab. Rather, cross-cultural communication is enhanced through

positive speech such as encouragement, affirmation, recognition and phrasing requests clearly or expressing opinions sensitively.

*Observation*

Large amounts of cross-cultural information can be read in people's dress, body

language, interaction and behavior. Be aware of differences with your own culture and try to understand the roots of behaviors. Asking questions expands your cross-cultural knowledge.

*Patience*

People need to recognize and understand that sometimes cross-cultural differences

are annoying and frustrating. In these situations, patience is definitely a virtue. Through patience, respect is won, and cross-cultural understanding is enhanced.

*Flexibility*

Flexibility, adaptability and open-mindedness are the route to successful cross-cultural communication. Understanding, embracing and addressing cross-cultural differences leads to the breaking of cultural barriers, which results in better lines of communication, mutual trust and creative thinking.

Following these five cross-cultural communication needs will allow us to improve lines of communication and better cross-cultural awareness and successful cross-cultural relationships.

Communication as process

Communication arose and developed with the rise of man and the formation of society in the process of labor.

*Communication* is a process, whereby information is enclosed in a package, channeled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via some medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback.

Communication requires that all parties have an area of communicative commonality. There are auditory means, such as speech, song, and tone of voice, and there are nonverbal means, such as body language, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, through media, i.e., pictures, graphics and sound, and writing.

Communication processes of information transmission are governed by three levels of semiotic rules: syntactic (formal properties of signs and symbols); pragmatic (concerned with the relations between signs/expressions and their users); semantic (study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent).

Communication is interactive, so an important influence on its effectiveness is our relationship with others. Communication is social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules. We do most of our communicating using speech and our understanding of speech to greet people and tell them our news, to ask and answer questions, and to use the telephone.

Communication is extremely diverse in its forms. Communication as the art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another, may be verbal and nonverbal. Communication types are differentiated according to communication channels. These are means available to communicate with another person or group. They may include direct face-to-face communication, telecommunications (telephone, e-mail, written communications), or indirect communication – through third parties or the media, for example.

Direct Communication takes place when people say what they mean, when the idea of saving face is not of major consequence in most situations, when silence in conversations is viewed as uncomfortable and interruptions are common. Direct communicators believe that it is better to say what needs to be said. Groups that prefer a direct style of communicating focus on the explicit meaning of words, similar to low context cultures. The popular saying, “*You can take my words to the bank*” conveys a belief that individuals say exactly what they mean. Americans, Germans, and Israelis, are direct communicators, each having varying degrees of directness. People who are direct communicators use clear, definitive statements, participate actively in meetings, make their points with conviction, they are comfortable telling others what to do, using words like “*should*”, “*have to*”. They tell others why their ideas should be adopted.

Indirect communication is when meaning is not only in the words, but also mainly in the surrounding context of a conversation. Indirect communication takes place when people imply what they mean; reading into things is the definitive way of communicating, when saving face and maintaining harmony is paramount, when silence in conversations is expected and appreciated and interruptions are to be avoided. Indirect communicators ask many questions. They quietly observe in meetings, offer suggestions for consideration, like to get others involved in discussions, use words like “maybe”, “possibly” and ask others to consider their ideas. There is an opinion that “Indirect communicators do not believe everything needs to be said. They are often part of a culture that is more group-focused rather than individual-focused. Because of this, they live within societal norms that are different and less focused on individual needs. An important goal of their conversational style is to maintain harmony, or at least the appearance of harmony. Therefore, not everything is said, but rather, much can be implied.”

Language as a powerful means of communication

Thanks to communication the individual's thoughts and aspirations not obliterated by time. They are in words, images; they survive in legend and passed on from century to century. Language is a powerful means of communication. In life, communication does not exist as an isolated process or independent form of activity. It is included in individual or group practical activities realized within intensive and comprehensive dialogue with the help of language.

Language is the development of the basic form of communication between human beings, and in a society.

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. Communication is unmanageable without primary language skills or “the mode or manner in which language is used. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing –– the four language skills. Sometimes speaking and writing are called the active/productive skills and reading and listening, the passive/receptive skills.”

We begin to learn the words when we need to express ourselves, when we are less than a year old and store them in our brains in a „mental dictionary’. In this way, we can understand words when we hear them and say them when we need to. We also learn the rules for putting words together into sentences as well as how to use letters and write them down.

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other. A language both reflects and affects a culture's way of thinking, and changes in a culture influence the development of its language. Language is fundamental to a huge range of human activities, whether you're sitting and thinking, interacting with others at a social event, reading a book, working out why an advert is funny — and the rest. When language is used, ideas are shared, and important information is passed between individuals verbally.

Language as a powerful means of communication

Thanks to communication the individual's thoughts and aspirations not obliterated by time. They are in words, images; they survive in legend and passed on from century to century. Language is a powerful means of communication. In life, communication does not exist as an isolated process or independent form of activity. It is included in individual or group practical activities realized within intensive and comprehensive dialogue with the help of language.

Language is the development of the basic form of communication between human beings, and in a society.

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. Communication is unmanageable without primary language skills or “the mode or manner in which language is used. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing –– the four language skills. Sometimes speaking and writing are called the active/productive skills and reading and listening, the passive/receptive skills.”

We begin to learn the words when we need to express ourselves, when we are less than a year old and store them in our brains in a „mental dictionary’. In this way, we can understand words when we hear them and say them when we need to. We also learn the rules for putting words together into sentences as well as how to use letters and write them down.

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other. A language both reflects and affects a culture's way of thinking, and changes in a culture influence the development of its language. Language is fundamental to a huge range of human activities, whether you're sitting and thinking, interacting with others at a social event, reading a book, working out why an advert is funny — and the rest. When language is used, ideas are shared, and important information is passed between individuals verbally.

The concept of culture

*Culture* is the basic concept of cross-cultural communication.

*Culture* not only dictates who talks what, to whom, how, and why, but also helps to determine how communication proceeds and messages are encoded to transmit the intended meanings.

*Culture* is ‘the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.’

*Culture* 'the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group‘. The term *culture* is taken from the technical vocabulary of anthropology, wherein it embraces the entire way of life of members of a community insofar as it is conditioned by that membership.

The term *culture* refers to all the learned and not given by nature characteristics common to a particular group of people. It is defined as:

* + - Way of life, especially general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time (e.g. Youth / working-class / Russian / Roman / mass culture).
    - Ideas, customs, and art that are produced or shared by a particular society (e.g., He was a fervent admirer of Roman and Greek culture...).
    - A particular society or civilization, especially one considered in relation to its ideas, its art, or its way of life (e.g. the rich history of African civilizations and cultures).
    - A system of communication, which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing.

Primary cultural dimensions are:

* Patterns of thought – common ways of thinking, where thinking includes factual beliefs, values, norms, and emotional attitudes.
* Patterns of behavior – common ways of behaving, from ways of speaking to ways of conducting commerce and industry, where the behavior can be intentional/unintentional, aware/unaware or individual/interactive.
* Patterns of artifacts – common ways of manufacturing and using material things, from pens to houses, where artifacts include dwellings, tools, machines or media. The artifactual dimension of culture usually given special attention in museums.
* Imprints in nature – the long lasting imprints left by a group in the natural surroundings, where such imprints include agriculture, trash, roads or intact/ruined human habitations.